UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/393
26 May 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

LETTER DATED 25 MAY 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 25 May 1997 addressed to you by Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, concerning extensive Turkish incursions into the northern areas of Iraq, and the lack of concern shown by the Security Council with regard to this serious development.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 25 May 1997 from the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

On 13 May 1997, Turkish armed forces carried out extensive acts of military aggression in the northern areas of Iraq, in which all types of weapons were used. This was on the pretext of repelling elements hostile to the Turkish authorities that are present in those areas owing to the situation currently in force there, which is well-known to the members of the Security Council and the international community.

Whatever excuse the Turkish Government put forward to justify this aggression, the latter was a flagrant, extensive and grave violation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national security of Iraq. It is also, without doubt, a flagrant and dangerous violation of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

If, furthermore, we take into consideration that Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq, in particular Security Council resolution 687 (1991), affirm the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, the Turkish incursion into northern Iraq should be considered as a violation of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq.

Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, has kept you informed of similar acts of aggression in his letters dated 6, 15 and 18 May 1997 addressed to you and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Nevertheless, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, you yourself in your capacity as President of the Security Council, and the members of the Security Council, have not yet taken any measures in regard to this aggression, apart from a brief statement issued by the Secretary-General that was not commensurate with the gravity of the Turkish action.

The Council meets and takes measures, or discusses the taking of measures, when much less significant events take place than those which have taken and are taking place in the north of our country. For example, after Iraq had exercised its natural and humanitarian right to transport a number of sick and elderly persons by air to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to perform the pilgrimage, some members of the Security Council considered that such an event merited discussion by the Council, and raised an outcry, as you are well aware. At the same time, however, you did not consider that the entry into the territory of a sovereign State of tens of thousands of Turkish armed forces, supported by tanks, artillery and aircraft, merited your attention.

The Security Council's failure to show any interest in this serious incident poses many important questions with regard to the resolutions that the Council has adopted on Iraq. These resolutions have imposed a long series of harsh conditions and sanctions on Iraq. A fundamental question must be asked: are the provisions of Security Council resolutions which you demand Iraq should

implement your only concern, while Iraqi concerns about sovereignty and legitimate authority are of no interest to you?

The Security Council owes both Iraq and international public opinion an answer to this question.

You are also aware that when, on 31 August 1996, the Government of Iraq decided to send military forces to the city of Irbil in order to expel elements supported by Iran which had formed an alliance with one of the militias controlling the region, the United States of America launched a hostile missile attack on Iraq. The Unites States, however, is giving its blessing to the current Turkish military aggression against Iraq, and together with the United Kingdom, is imposing an air embargo on the north of Iraq that is unsupported by any international law or Security Council resolution, and which has created a situation which makes the north of our country a theatre of aggression and foreign incursion.

How can the Security Council explain a situation whereby it forcibly prevents the Government of Iraq from exercising its sovereignty over its territory and airspace, while it turns a blind eye to dangerous foreign military aggression that threatens this sovereignty?

While drawing the attention of yourself and the members of the Security Council to this flagrant contradiction in the position adopted towards Iraq, and the obvious hostility to its sovereignty, rights and legitimate authority on the part of the States members of the Security Council, Iraq reserves its complete right to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity and security.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister